

The whole

LIFE and CHARACTER

O F

JANE SHORE.

B E I N G

A full Account of her Birth, Parentage, Education, Conversation, Marriage, Rise, Amours with King *Edward* the Fourth, Disgrace, and Penance at *St. Paul's* Cathedral, and her miserable Fall and Death; set forth from the best of Historians, especially the famous *Sir Thomas More*, Kt. Lord High Chancellor of *England*.

Which is now Acted at both the Queen's Theatres, in *Drury-Lane* and the *Hay-Market*.

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*The whole Life and Character of
Jane Shore, &c.*

E DWARD, the Fourth of that Name, and Fifty fourth Monarch of this Land, was a Prince so happily 'adorned with all the Accomplishments of Mind, Body and Estate, that he seem'd to be the Darling of Nature and Fortune. His Body was framed and Proportioned to an uncommon degree of Symmetry and Exactness; his Aspect was very bright and inviting; his Hair gay and flowing, and all his Limbs and Features were wonderfully regular; yet with this Delicacy he was blest with as much Vigour, Health and Strength of Constitution, as Men of the most robust and athletick Size are capable of enjoying.

Indeed the Goodness of his Nature was something extravagant towards the fair Sex, and degenerated into a Criminal Affection for them. For tho' he had marry'd a Lady who charm'd him with her Beauty, Modesty, Virtue, and excellent Parts and Sense, and made her his Queen against his Duty to his Mother, who earnestly dissuaded him from it, and to the Ruin of his Interest with his great and dangerous Friend *Warwick* who

was at that time, by his Order, treating a Marriage for him with the *French King's* Daughter, which shews that he was passionately in Love with this Lady, yet his amorous Appetite was not so satisfy'd but run astray after several other Women, who he took to a Partnership of his Bed; of whom, she that he is reported to have loved best, and who has obtain'd the largest Place in the Histories of those Times, was the celebrated *Jane Shore*, whose Life and Character I am now to give you.

In drawing of which, I shall set before me a Piece taken from the Life, by the accurate Hand of the most ingenious and larned Sir *Thomas More*, who in his History of *Richard III*, where he mentions the Barbarity of that Tyrant towards some of the late King *Edward's* Friends, takes occasion to speak very particularly of the Person and Fortunes of this Gentlewoman, who, he tells us, was alive in the eighteenth Year of King *Henry VIII*, in whose Reign, 'tis well known, Sir *Thomas* was Lord Chancellor. Being therefore her Cotemporary, and living at Court, he had seen her often, and was very capable to give that exact Discription and Account of her, as he has left us.

Jane Shore's Maiden Name was *Wainstead*, being the only Child of Mr. *Thomas Wainstead*, a Mercer of a good Figure and Reputation in *Cheapside, London*. She was bred up with all the Care and Tenderness which is Natural from indulgent

dulgent Parents to an only Child, and none of the fine Qualifications which serve to recommend young Ladies, as Musick, Singing, Dancing, were left out of her Education. Besides her Father's Trade lying among the Court Ladies, he had frequent Opportunities to shew his Daughter the Gallantries and Diversions of the Royal Palace; which made Impressions upon her witty Fancy, and brought her to disrelish the common Shews and Entertainments of the City.

As she grew up, she made Improvements in all the Parts of Breeding, and soon was Mistress of more Wit and good Humour than the rest of her Sex. This, together with her graceful Mine and pretty Features, drew the Eyes of all Men to take Notice of her, which they could not do without doating on her Charms, and fixing her lovely Image in their Souls,

Several great Lords had set their Hearts upon her, and their Heads were at Work how to get her for a Mistress. Which when her Father perceived, he thought it time to rescue her from being made a Prey, and sent her to take the Country Air, with a Sister of his who dwelt in *Northampton*. Here she continued for about Twelve Months; which was thought time long enough for the Passion of her Lovers to cool in, and their Inquiries after her to cease, and so she was recall'd again to her Father's House. But Lust and Envy are watchful Things. No sooner was she brought to Town, but the Lord *Hastings*, the King's Chamberlain, had laid a Design to carry her

her off by Night in his Chariot ; and in order to effect it, had bribed Mr. *Wainstead's* Maid with a Present of Gold, to give him an Opportunity, and assist him in the Rape. But the Wench had the Grace to repent, and discover the Plot in time to her Master ; and so it was prevented.

Mr. *Wainstead* was now fully convinced, that he could not, without the utmost Hazard, continue his Daughter in a single State, the common Mark of Beaux and Gallants ; and therefore, tho' she was very Young, he was resolved to cut off the Hopes of all leud Pretenders, by throwing her immediately into the Arms of an Husband. Among those who made honourable Love to her, was Mr. *Matthew Shore*, a rich Goldsmith in *Lumbard-street*, and a Man of a very fair Character both for Religion and Morals. Which Considerations determin'd her Father to make Choice of him for her Husband. But the young Lady was not over-fond of the Match, however, the Authority of a kind Father, and the costly Presents of a rich and generous Lover, brought her, at least in appearance, to consent to it : Whereupon their Wedding was solemnized with great Pomp and Splendor, many Ladies and Gentlemen from the Court, as well as the City, shining at the Marriage-Feast, in their most sumptuous Equipage and Attire.

The Lord *Hastings*, who had formerly attempted to ravish the Bud of this blooming Beauty, was not at all pleased to hear she had changed her Condition ; however, he had not changed his Passion for her. He waited on her to wish her Joy, and

and being courteously receiv'd, repeated his Visits, and somerimes invited the Marry'd Couple to Court, where he entertain'd with every thing that was desirable. This brought him into great Familiarity and Confidence with them, so that he found Opportunities to be alone with Mrs. *Shore*, wherein he fail'd not to prosecute his leud Design, ply-
 in her with Presents and fond Discourses, to allure her to transgress her Nuptial Vow; but she was so very facetious and witty, and so baffled him with her quick and smart replies, that he could make nothing of her; when he flatter'd himself that she was just disposed to yield to his Embraces, then to his Confusion he found himself quite disappointed and left to Despair of ever succeeding. It is reported, that one Day being alone with her, and resolving to make his last Effort upon her Chastity, he flung her upon a Bed that stood in the Room, and went about to force her; but she disengaged herself from him, and ran to her Husband, telling him plainly what Rudeness the Lord *Hastings* had offer'd to her; which obliged Mr. *Shore* to expostulate modestly with his Lordship, and desire him to forbear making any more Visits at his House.

At this my Lord was so overwhelm'd with Indignation and Shame, that he vow'd he would be reveng'd on them both, and send such a Rival in his room, that neither the Husband's Authority nor the Wife's Chastity should be able to withstand. We told you before, that he was Chamberlain to King *Edward*, whose Inclinations to fine Women

Women he understood perfectly well; and considering that his tedious Wars and Struggles with the House of *Lancaster* were happily ended, and he in quiet Possession of the Crown, and at leisure to attend the pleasing Adventure, he takes a fit Opportunity, when his Prince was agreeably disposed, and gives him an Account of his late Entertainments at Mr. *Shore's*, and how much his Wife excell'd all the Females that ever he had conversed with in Beauty, Wit, Education, and every thing that was lovely and desirable in one of her Sex.

These Encomiums made by a florid Orator upon a grateful and young well-deserving Subject, sensibly touch'd the Heart of a young Voluptuous Monarch, who was above the fear of Laws, and had by his early Excesses given Countenance and Reputation to vitious Love. He was impatient to make nearer approaches to the Fire which had warm'd his Heart at a distance, and Fame has told us that he compass'd his End by the following Means.

He put himself into the Habit of a Merchant, and with the attendance of only one Servant, withdrew privately from Court, and came to Mr. *Shore's*: Finding the good Man busie in his Affairs, he sat down till he was at leisure, and then desired to see some Plate, which was shew'd him, and he soon agreed for a considerable quantity, under pretence of carrying it with him beyond Sea; but not seeing her who was the only Reason of his coming hither, and unwilling to depart without

without his Errand, he fell into Discourse of News and Trade, and several diverting Subjects, at last they came to the Topick of Matrimony. 'Tis pity, says the King, *that there is not a Mistress to this fair House; I fancy, Sir, I could fit you with one that is Young, Beautiful, and a very good Fortune.* Sir, said Mr. Shore, *I give you many Thanks, I am already provided;* and there-upon calls down his Wife, who presently appear'd a lovely Creature, not only equal, but superior to the great Character which the Lord *Hastings* had given of her.

By the Character we have already given of the King, you may reasonably presume that a Woman of these Qualifications would prove a strong Temptation to him, who was himself a Person of Wit and good Humour, as appears in several of his Sayings, especially in that Dialogue he had with his Mother about his Marriage with the Lady *Grey*. And now having sat a-while in full view of Mrs. *Shore's* irresistible Charms, ravish'd with the Musick of her Enchanting Tongue, he unwillingly took his leave, resolved at any rate to Purchase the inestimable Jewel, and have the free and full Enjoyment of her.

To insinuate himself therefore into her Affections, and draw her to his Arms by fond Allurements, he confers with the Lord *Hastings* what was to be done. He, when he perceiv'd his Master's Concern, told him with a Smile, he would soon make him Easie. There was one Mrs. *Blague*, a Lace-woman to the Court, who was

Mrs. *Shore's* Neighbour, and intimately acquainted; they often visited, and spent the Evenings together. She was a very intriguing Dame, and for Money would betray not only her best Friend, but her own Daughter. He presented her with a Purse of Gold, and bid her hope for greater Matters, if she would well and faithfully serve her Prince; and then communicated the Affair to her, which she undertook to manage with the utmost Secrecy and Conduct.

The City was apprized of a splended *Masque* ready to be presented at Court, and the fair Sex were preparing for it. Mrs. *Bleague* undertook, with Mr. *Shore's* leave, to help his Spouse to a good Placce; which Offer she gladly accepted, and (not suspecting the Plot) put her self in a Dress that might vie with the greatest Court Ladies. After much Pastime and Diversion, a Man of an extraordinary Figure stands out to Dance; upon which Mrs. *Shore* heard the Ladies whisper, *That's the King: Who had*
soon

soon spied her through his Mask, (for he knew where to look for her) and stepping to her Seat, took her out for a Partner. When she had perform'd her Part with great Applause, he places her again in her Seat, slips a Letter into her Hand. and retires. The Entertainment being ended, she posts away with Mrs. *Blague*, and the first Opportunity she could get, opens the Letter: Which was to acquaint her, that the Person who had lately waited on her, was the King; who condescended Humbly to solicit her Love, which he valued above all Things in the World, and offer'd her all the Delights and Pleasures of his Court in recompence for it.

Upon this plain discovery she was not a little concern'd and divided in her Thoughts what to do; but advising with her Companion, who was privately bribed to Betray her, she plyed her with such Arguments as determin'd her to prefer the King before the Goldsmith.

Nothing now remain'd for her to do,

but to change her Station with as much Secrecy and Silence as she could. Mrs. *Blague* had given the King notice of her successful Management for him ; who immediately sent a Chariot to her House, to bring off the long desir'd Prize. Thither Mrs. *Shore* convey'd her Jewels, and chiocest Things, intended not to stay long behind them. However, she sat down to Supper with her Husband, and was shewing her self very Complaisant to him ; when on a sudden a Messenger came with a feign'd Errand, That her Mother was taken very ill, and must needs speak with her presently. Her Husband wou'd have gone along with her, but she found Reasons to leave him at Home ; and so giving him the last Kiss he ever had of her Lips, with Tears in her Eyes, took her leave of him. Mrs. *Blague* went into the Chariot with her, and soon lodg'd this Treasure of Beauty in her Monarch's Arms.

Her forsaken Husband past the tedious Hours till very late at Night, waiting
for

for the return of his Wife : Upon whose continued Absence he grew much troubled and concern'd, and went to seek her at her Mother's House, but she had not seen her all that Day, nor had been ill, as was pretended. This struck him in great Consternation, and he ran about from one Relation to another, to find her out. All the next Day was spent to as little purpose ; so that the poor Man was almost out of his Wits for her, and concluded (from what had formerly been attempted) that she was carried away by some amorous Courtier ; but it was not long e'er he had full Assurance given him, that she was entertain'd by the King as a Bedfellow. This put him out of all hopes of ever recovering her again. The best Historians say, that from this time he entirely quitted her to her Royal Lover, and had never any further Enjoyment of her. Others add, that the unhappy Man was thrown into a deep Melancholly by this Misfortune, and became uncable of following his

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Business ; and to cure his distemper'd Mind, went into Foreign Parts, and travell'd in *Flanders, France, Spain* and *Turkey*, till he had spent all that he had. And returning home, when he thought every body had forgot him, lived poorly, and died miserable, in the Reign of *Henry VII.* as his unfaithful Wife, the Cause of his Sufferings, did afterwards in the succeeding Reign.

But at present she was mounted to the highest point of Elevation that her fond Prince could raise her to, excepting only this, that she was not his lawful *Queen* ; whom certainly she eclipsed, as she did all the rest of his Mistresses. For whoever had any Favour to solicit at Court, they made *Mrs. Shore* their Patroness to the King, as knowing she had the greatest Influence over him ; indeed he loved her so well, he could deny her nothing.

But when the fatal Day was come that King *Edward* ended his Reign and Life together, his beloved Mistress was cast out

out of her Paradise, and fell from the Summit of her exalted Station; yet not so as to plunge at once into that Ocean of Miseries which at last swallow'd up all her Joys: It was but an easie Descent at present, from the Crown to the Coronet, from Royal Majesty to High Nobility. You heard before how the Lord Chamberlain *Hastings* was in the Number of her most early Admirers, and was more than once in Danger of violently seizing upon that which his Addresses could not obtain; and tho' he gratify'd his Revenge by stirring up the King to carry her effectually from her Husband's Bed, yet this did not make a perfect Cure of his Passion, nor efface the bewitching Image which she had imprest upon his Heart. He did indeed contain himself, and keep at a due distance from her, during the King's Life, either out of Reverence to his Royal Master, or from a pure Principle of Fidelity and Honesty; but upon his Decease, he renew'd his old Offers of

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Kindness to her, and was accepted, and so took her Home to himself; which afterwards involved her in his Ruin, and sunk her to the lowest degree of Wretchedness, as you'll understand by what follows.

King *Edward* being Dead, and his two Sons much under Age, his Brother, the Duke of *Gloucester*, now *Protector* of the Realm, and afterwards King *Richard* the III, aspir'd to the Crown, cruelly sacrificing all Men to his Ambition, who he suspected might oppose his Accession to it. Amongst the rest, he compass'd the Death of the Lord *Hastings*, the Friend of *Jane Shore*. Then the Protector and his Council accused her of open and scandalous Whoredom; which indeed she could not deny, because all the World knew it to be true: And therefore, to make an Example of her, they deliver'd her over to the Bishop of *London* to do publick Pennance for her Incontinence, in the *Cathedral* of *St. Paul's*, which she accordingly perform'd the next
Sunday

Sunday Morning, after this manner : Mrs. *Shore* being stript of all her Ornaments, and cloath'd in a White Sheet, was brought by way of Procession, with the *Cross* carry'd before her, and a Wax-Taper in her Hand, to *St. Paul's Church* from the Bishop's Palace adjoining, thro' great *Crowds* of People who came to gaze on her ; and there standing before the Preacher, she soon acknowledg'd, in a set Form of Words, her notorious Uncleaness, and declared her Repentance of it.

From this time we are to call the once admir'd, flourishing, and almost Royal Mrs. *Shore*, a mean, contemptible, helpless Woman. She was now thrown down from the Palace to the Prison, reduced from the highest Seat of Honour to a very low State of Infamy and Reproach ; both Husband and Lovers were taken away from her ; she was spoil'd of her Goods, and bereav'd of her Friends. Her Father and Mother vyere kill'd with Grief, and the rest

of her Relations lost all they had, by the violence of the *Protector*, who pretended that they got it from the *Crown* by her Interest with the King. But that which was most terrible and horrid even to mention, we are told that the Tyrant put out a Proclamation, commanding all People upon Pain of Death and *Confiscation* of Goods, not to Harbour her in their Houses, or relieve her with Food or Raiment. And to confirm this, they report, that a Baker in the *City* was hang'd for throwing out a Penny-Loaf to her, as she went by his Door, in Gratitude to her for saving his Life when he should have been hang'd for a Riot in the late King's Reign. So that she was forced to wander up and down, gathering any Trash she could find in the Fields and Streets for Sustenance. However we cannot suppose that this inhuman *Prohibition* should be of any force in the two next Reigns wherein she lived: And for the present Tyranny, it was but of two Years continuance.

tinuance. But the wretched Fate of 'a begging Vagrant attended her to the end of her Days, and her dismal Fortune never cleared up, or once more smiled upon her.

One might justly have expected, that a Woman, who in the Days of her great Prosperity and Power with her Prince, had done so many good Offices in the World, as we before observed, and rais'd a great many Men to Riches and Honours, should have found one Friend at least, endued with so much Gratitude, as to convey Relief to her by some means or other, and rescue her from the last Extremes of Poverty and Want: But every one of them (as if they had combin'd together so to do) shut their Doors against her, and shew'd her no manner of Compassion. Upon the first Notice she had of the Death of the Lord *Hastings*; and the Storm that hung over her own Head upon his Account, she presum'd the House of her old Friend

Friend and Confident *Mrs. Blague*, whom she had obliged in every thing, would be a safe Harbour for such Goods as she could conceal there; with her therefore she deposited her Jewels and richest Things, upon Promise that they should be safely restor'd whenever she demanded them: But when her Necessities compell'd her to seek after them, the faithless Woman denied every thing, and thrust her out of her House with threatening and reproachful Language.

Just and equitable it was, that she should feel the Smart of those Necessities and Hardships into which she had first driven her own Husband, that the Melancholy and Sorrows which she created a good *Queen*, should return upon herself at last, and overwhelm her own Soul; that since she had abused her rich Attire, her soft and clear Skin, and her pleasant Wit to such a wicked end, she should be reduced to Rags, turned into a haggard unlovely Creature, and not to be able with all her Eloquence to prevail with any Body to give her a piece of Bread.

These miserable Days made up the greatest part of her Life, and far exceeded the time she had spent in Luxury and Wantonness, viz. Two Years of *Richard III.* Twenty-four of *Henry VII.* and Eighteen of *Henry VIII.* when she ended her miserable Days in *Shoreditch* in the Suburbs of *London*, from which Disaster that Place is suppos'd to retain that Name to this Day.